

OUR SERVICE CONTEMPORARIES.

During the recent German manœuvres an innovation in shoe leather was experimented with by a company belonging to the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards. In place of the boot soles being furnished with nails, they were soaked in a preparation of linseed oil and fine scrap iron. This composition, it is asserted, leaves the leather supple, and at the same time causes the soles to wear much longer than if studded with hobnails. It is to be hoped the experiment proved successful, and that further details on the subject will be speedily forthcoming. Even if it proves to have been only moderately successful, the expedient has manifest advantages over the alternative—also being tried—of using aluminium nails.

The re-arming of the whole of the Indian (Native) Army with Martini rifles has been completed.

None too soon, it is thought, public indignation would seem to be reaching the boiling point regarding the shameful desecration that has for some time past been night'y committed upon the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square. No Englishman, be he a naval man or otherwise, can witness this insult offered to the memory of our great naval hero without feeling shame for the perpetrators and the authorities that permit it, and it is agreed with a writer to the Times that there is no difference between throwing flaring, blatant advertisements in electric light on to monuments and public buildings that ought to be respected and plastering bills. One is as unsightly as the other.

It is certainly believed that, in no other country in Europe, would such a thing be permitted. There is some satisfaction felt that counsel's opinion should have been given that "the owners of the buildings affected by the advertisements can proceed for trespass or nuisance;" but it is greatly feared that the vandalism will not be put a stop to until Parliament can be induced to amend the Metropolitan Police Act, and extend its control to this form of advertisement. Provincial communities should also, it is felt, be given ample powers to suppress this novel form of nuisance.

It is pointed out that the statement that the United States battle-ship *Maine*, which during her recent trials attained a speed of 17.55 knots, and proved herself the fastest ship of her class in the world, is a mistake. Our barbette ships *Barfleur* and *Centurion* are 18.5 knot ships, the latter during her trials attaining a speed of 18.51 knots by *Ler log*. The whole of the Royal Sovereign class are capable of steaming as fast as the *Maine*, whilst the Royal Oak steamed 18.5 by *log* on her trial.

Very disquieting news comes from the East; the raw levies of Chinese troops are looked upon as a serious menace to the safety of the Empire, and foreigners

and natives alike are removing to the coast for safety. Intense corruption is said to prevail, and the Emperor's disgraced uncle has been recalled and associated with the Viceroy in the conduct of the war. There seems to be no doubt about the evacuation of *Wi-Ju* in face of the Japanese; we are told, however, that the Chinese general preferred to fight with the river in front of him rather than behind him. Central News telegrams from Shanghai state that the Governor of the Manchurian province of Kirin reports the landing of the Japanese force near Hunchun. Forces are being organized to meet the invaders. From Hankow it is reported that the province of Hoo-pe has been quite denuded of troops, and that turbulent demonstrations are taking place, while the authorities have no means of seeking the people in check. All the European women and children are to be sent down as soon as possible to Shanghai for safety.

It is announced that a submarine torpedo-boat, capable of sinking to any depth and travelling under the water as quickly as on the surface without revealing its presence, has been invented by Mr. Seymour Allen, a resident in Sydney. The model was tried at Melbourne on Monday, in presence of Lord Hopetoun and a number of naval and military officers. The experiments were a complete success, the model rising or sinking, stern or bow, turning, reversing, remaining stationary, in obedience to the electric current by which it is worked. The inventor claims that a full-sized boat would be capable of remaining under water for three days. It would carry torpedoes on the bow and stern decks. When fired the projectiles would be magnetically attracted to the bottom of an enemy's ship. Rear-Admiral Bowden-Smith, commanding on the station, who inspected the model at Sydney, is reported to have declared that if the vessel would do what the model performed it would revolutionise naval warfare.

At a public meeting convened by the Acting Chief Justice, and presided over by the Governor, at the City Hall, Hong Kong, on the 27th ult., the following resolution was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted: "That this meeting resolves that the services rendered to the community during the recent plague by those who assisted us are worthy of recognition." The Governor having opened the meeting in a short speech, the Acting Chief Justice (the Hon. E. J. Ackroyd) expressed the gratitude of the community for the invaluable services rendered by the volunteers from the 1st battalion Shropshire Light Infantry, the Permanent Committee, the Medical Staff, the Civil Volunteers' Hospital Nurses, and others. He said that among the glorious records of the Shropshires in the Peninsula, in India, Egypt, and the Soudan, the noble manner in which they had come forward and rendered their invaluable help to the Colony in the hour of need would not be considered the least of their achievements. A committee was

appointed to carry the first resolution into effect.

From Lagos comes intelligence that the chief Nana, whose town on the Benin River was stormed by a British punitive force on September 25, has arrived there and given himself up to the authorities. Nana, who took the flight after the capture of his stronghold, proceeded to Lagos by the bush route without any followers. He throws himself upon the clemency of the British Government, appealing to the Foreign Office to have the matters in dispute adjusted on the spot.

The French military papers severely criticise the inadequacy of the Army Estimates proposed for 1895. These amount to, in round figures, 593,000,000 francs for ordinary expenditure and 45,000,000 francs extraordinary expenses, making a total of 638 million francs. On the other hand, the German Budget for 1894-95, submitted to the Reichstag in March last, amounted to 600,000,000 francs for ordinary expenditure (an increase of 65 million francs) and 188 million francs for extraordinary expenditure, making a total, for Army purposes, of 788 million francs, or, in other words, £6,000,000 in excess of the amount which it is proposed to ask for the French Army. The French Army Estimates, moreover, it is asserted, provide for certain important expenses, such as Gendarmerie, etc., which are not borne by the German military Budget, so that the actual sum available for Army services proper in reality only amounts to a total of 563 millions, including the extraordinary expenditure. The French papers have also unanimously entered into a crusade against the illusory character of the numbers annually voted as compared with those actually borne, and called for a prompt remedy to be applied to the palpable deficiencies which exist between the numbers which are supposed to constitute the nominal French company and the actual figures. As the points involved in the controversy seriously affect the organisation of the French Army, we propose to return to this question on an early occasion.

FIGHTING IN EAST AFRICA.

DURBAN, Sept. 18th.

Some details have reached here of serious fighting in the Congo Free State between the great Arab chief Rumiliza and a Belgian force. In the earlier fighting the Belgian allies lost heavily, and a meeting under a flag of truce was then arranged. Friendly salutations were exchanged, but the conference had scarcely opened when the Arab powder magazine exploded. Both sides suspected treachery, and in the confusion guns were discharged and the fight became general. The Arabs tried to escape, but all avenues were closed to them, and they were cut down without quarter. Rumiliza effected his escape, but the flower of his braves fell. Over thirty Arab chiefs were killed, and property value 300,000 lakhs was lost. Rumiliza after the fight sought to make his way to Tanganyika to ask permission to march to the coast, via Nyassa, and the Zambesi. Rumilia has frequently shown a friendly disposition towards the British.